



Is private fostering the same as foster care?

No, they are different. When you are privately fostered, social workers don't arrange where you live but they do have to make sure it is safe for you.

Foster care is arranged by social workers when children can't live at home, and this is called being Looked After (previously called being in care).

What will my private foster carers do for me?

The people you live with should look after you like their own child. This includes:

- Giving you regular meals
- Making sure you have a bed of your own and clean clothes
- Making sure you go to school
- Making sure you go to the doctor or hospital if you are ill
- Making sure you go to a dentist for regular checks
- Helping you to enjoy sports and hobbies
- Helping you to stay in touch with your family
- Helping you to follow any religion or customs that are important to you

What will my family do for me?

Your family are still legally responsible for you and should stay in contact with you. They have to give permission for certain things to happen:

- Changing school
- Going on holiday
- Having serious medical treatment
- Moving to another family



Who needs to know I'm privately fostered?

The law says that Children's Services have to be told about every child or young person who is privately fostered and every child or young person will have their own social worker.

Your school should be told your new address and the names of the people you are living with.

What will my social worker do for me?

A social worker is someone whose job is to help children or young people and their families, and this includes making sure that you are safe and being looked after properly.

You should be seen by a social worker within a week of Children's Services being told that you are privately fostered. After that, your social worker should come and see you every six weeks. Your social worker will talk to your private foster carer, and will also want to see you on your own. This is so that you can tell them about anything that is worrying you, so it's a good idea to get to know them.

A year after Children's Services have first visited you, your social worker might not visit you as often, but you can always ask to see your social worker if you want to talk to them.



Anna's story

Anna is 15 and doesn't get on with her mum's new boyfriend. Anna thinks that she is expected to baby-sit her younger brother and sister too much but her mum thinks she is lazy. It leads to lots of rows so Anna spends more and more time with her friend Gemma and Gemma's family. After a big row at home, Anna asks Gemma's mum if she can stay at their house. Anna's mum thinks that this is a good idea and tells Children's Services that Anna will be staying with Gemma's family for a while.

Gemma's family is now privately fostering Anna so Children's Services have to visit to make sure that Anna is safe.

Darren's story

Darren is 13 and lives with his dad. His mother left home when Darren was young and he doesn't have any contact with her. Darren's dad has to go into hospital for several weeks and Darren's nan lives miles away. Darren wants to carry on going to school with his mates so Darren's dad asks a family in the next road if they will look after Darren.

This family are now private foster carers so they let Children's Services know and a social worker visits to make sure that Darren is being looked after properly.

Becky's story

Becky is 14 and lives with her mum and dad in a new house. Becky is finding it difficult to make friends and some of the local kids have been calling her names. Her mum and dad can see that she is unhappy so agree that she can go and stay with a family friend until things can be sorted out.

Both Becky's mum and the family friend phone Children's Services because they know that Becky is being privately fostered and they want to make sure the arrangements are made properly.

What can I do if I'm not happy about the service from Children's Services?

We work very hard to give you a good service, but sometimes you might not think we have got it right. We need to hear from you so that we can get it right in the future. Ask your social worker for the Worcestershire Children's Services "Compliments, Comments and Complaints" leaflet.

If you would prefer to talk to someone who is separate from Children's Services, you can talk to Ofsted. Ofsted's job is to check that Children's Services are doing their job properly. When they do an inspection, they ask privately fostered children and young people what they think about the service they are getting. If you want to, you can contact them at any time.

Ofsted, 3rd Floor, Royal Exchange Building, St. Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA
Tel: 08456 40 40 40

Who else can I talk to?

Children's Rights Officer

Children's Advice and Representation Service
Freephone 0800 233 311
Tel: 01905 617975

Childline

24 hour freephone helpline 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre

Freephone 0800783 2187
www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Space

Help with drug or alcohol problems
Tel: 01905 23060

Noah's Ark Trust

Help with the death of someone close to you
Tel: 01905 745735

The Line

For any young person living away from home
Tel: 0800 884 444
Mon-Fri 3.30pm-9.30pm
Sat-Sun 2.00pm-8.00pm

Stay Safe

Information about staying safe while using your computer
www.staysafe.org

Free phones are free from landlines and won't show up on the bill. They aren't usually free from mobiles.



What is private fostering?

Sometimes children or young people go to stay with someone who is not a close relative. If you are likely to stay in this person's home for 28 days or longer the law calls this private fostering. The person who is looking after you is a private foster carer and the law says that Children's Services must be told because it is their job to make sure that children are looked after properly.

Why are children privately fostered?

There can be lots of different reasons for being privately fostered. In Worcestershire the most common reasons are:

- You are a teenager and there are lots of rows at home so you go to stay with your friend's family until the problems can be sorted out.
- Your mum or dad is ill and cannot look after you so you go and stay with a neighbour or family friend.
- You are being bullied by local kids so you go and stay with a family friend in a different area.



This leaflet was produced with help from the following young people:
Chantelle, Chris, Dalian, and Sarah.

Private Fostering

A Guide for Children and Young People

This document can be made available in other languages (including British Sign language) and alternative formats (large print, audio tape, computer disk and Braille) on request from 01905 765975

'If you need help understanding this document in your own language, please contact Ethnic Access Link. Tel: 01905 25121' *(English)*

'যদি এই দলিলাটি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় বুঝতে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, অনুগ্রহ করে Ethnic Access Link (এথনিক অ্যাক্সেস লিংক) কে 01905 25121 টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন' *(Bengali)*

如果您需要這個文件的中文信息，請聯絡 Ethnic Access Link. 電話是01905 25121 *(Cantonese)*

'Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tego dokumentu we własnym języku, zadzwoń do Ethnic Access Link. Tel: 01905 25121' *(Polish)*

'Se necessitar de ajuda para perceber o conteúdo deste documento na sua língua, contacte a associação Ethnic Access Link pelo telefone: 01905 25121' *(Portuguese)*

'Si necesita ayuda para entender este documento en su idioma, puede ponerse en contacto con Ethnic Access Link en el teléfono 01905 25121' *(Spanish)*

Bu dokümanõ kendi dilinizde anlamak için yardım isterseniz Ethnic Access Link ile temasa geçiniz
Tel: 01905 25121' *(Turkish)*

'اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کو آپ کی اپنی زبان میں سمجھنے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے، تو براہ کرم
(Urdu) 01905 25121 فون: سے رابطہ کریں۔ ٹیلی فون: Ethnic Access Link